

THE
C H A R G E
1607/593
OF

THE HONORABLE DENIS GEORGE,
LATE RECORDER OF DUBLIN,

AND NOW ONE OF THE BARONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S
COURT OF EXCHEQUER IN IRELAND,

*DELIVERED BY HIM AT THE NEW SESSIONS-HOUSE,
ON THE 20TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1798,*

TO THE

GRAND JURIES FOR THE CITY OF DUBLIN,

AND

COUNTY OF DUBLIN,

AND NOW PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY JOHN EXSHAW, PRINTER AND STATIONER TO THE
GRAND JURY OF THE CITY OF DUBLIN, No. 98, GRAFTON-STREET.



THE
C H A R G E
OF
THE HONORABLE DENIS GEORGE, &c.

Gentlemen of both Grand Juries,


ON this day, for the first time, are opened here new Commissions of Oyer and Terminer and General Gaol Delivery; which we now proceed to execute.

I have often before had the honor to preside as Recorder of the city of Dublin, or as Judge, where most of you have acted as Grand Jurors.—I know that the general outline of your present duty, so well marked out to you by your oath, is fully understood by you; I therefore shall not delay you upon that topic, but call your attention to the species of crimes, which now prevail, and may be submitted to your consideration.

The offences formerly contained in the Dublin Statutes, were for the most part such as flowed from individual depravity; having for their end the destruction or the injury of the individual life of the subject; or the violent invasion of the liberty or property of a single man, and such crimes were mischievous and alarming; but the offences prevalent of late have had for their object a mischief more extended.—The subversion of the Kingly Power—the overthrow of our ancient Constitution—and the murder, or at least the banishment and ruin of every man attached to it; and the crimes which at present disfigure and disgrace our country shew but too plainly, that the dregs of the disorders with which we have been afflicted still remain; however, it is not to be doubted, but that our Government will by the most wise and effectual remedies prevent all danger of relapse.

Our calamities, however, having been local, have possibly produced one good effect, they have served to shew rash and inconsiderate men, who lived apart from the scenes of misery, the horrors which would have been universal, if rebellion had succeeded; and to convince them without bitter personal experience, of truths which otherwise they might not have believed.

This kingdom surrounded as it is by seas, and defended as it is, by victorious fleets, presented a place of security where much of the talents and riches of Europe would have concentrated, in taking refuge from the oppressions of France; and thus should we have flourished amidst the wreck of empires, becoming daily more rich and more prosperous had our people been “left to themselves” and allowed to judge of their condition by their own feelings, and their own senses.

But the reverse of things within a few years past has been sad indeed! and that reverse has been
 produced

produced by the unrelenting perseverance of wicked faction calling themselves United Irishmen, in the endeavour to disengage the people from the allegiance to the King, under whose mild government they have lived eight and thirty years, and who during all that time has made the happiness of his subjects and the prosperity and glory of his kingdoms the objects of his fondest care.

Every considerate man must know that the duty of allegiance which the subject owes to his King is an obligation of a most salutary nature.—The King when he accepts his Crown, does in the most solemn and public manner by his coronation oath, bind himself to the safety and happiness of his subjects, and to make the known laws of the land the rule of his conduct.—That oath he has fulfilled, and we have seen, and I hope, shall long enjoy a patriot King, at the head of our free Constitution.

We, his natural born subjects, on our part are bound to him in duty, even though we had never taken any oath of allegiance.—The oaths enjoined by our statutes in this particular are only declaratory of the duty which obliges us “to bear faith and true allegiance to his Majesty King George” “and him to defend to the utmost of our power” “against all traitorous conspiracies and attempts” “whatsoever which shall be made against his person, crown or dignity, and do our utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to his Majesty, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies” “which we shall know to be against him.” Such is our primary duty in society as Irish subjects, and to break or withhold this duty is, according to the circumstances, either high-treason or misprision of treason.

We cannot bear faith and true allegiance to his Majesty, without defending him to the utmost of our

power against all traitorous conspiracies and attempts which we know to be made against his person, crown or dignity; and this duty the loyal women of our counties have well, effectually and constantly fulfilled.—Nor, gentlemen, is this all, a less important duty remains—we are also bound to disclose and make known to his Majesty, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which we shall know to be against him,” and this duty, they do give true information to the Magistrates, and afterwards give full and true evidence in Courts of justice against traitors, do fulfil.

Such as value the applauses of immoral men, and court a base and criminal popularity, will alone be wanting in this branch of duty, which when honestly fulfilled is no less laudable, and likely to be more useful than the observance of any other.

They whose plans are deranged or whose hopes and wishes are lost by such disclosure, call all, who fulfil this branch of their allegiance, spies and informers, and wickedly compare them with certain monsters whom history has deservedly branded with infamy.—By such arts the sense of shame which was given to promote what is virtuous, is perverted; and men are made to blush when they set about duty the most indispensable, and which nothing less than the profligacy of these times could prevent from being the most popular also.

The duty of allegiance to the King is so blended with our own welfare, that in supporting the throne we but defend ourselves and our families, we are all held together in society by our political connection with him, and he cannot be deposed by reasonable practices without involving the whole nation in blood, and confusion, and experience has shewn us that *every stroke levelled at the Throne is necessarily levelled also at the public safety and tranquillity.*

The

The conspiracy that has been formed against our lives, liberties, and properties, has been by God blessing exposed, and it is now held up by the Reports of both Houses of Parliament, to public condemnation.

These Reports have shewn us the foul means that were made use of for our Destruction, and the unworthy instruments of treason, who vainly hoped to raise themselves to power on the ruins of the Kingly authority; and to riches, by the plunder of his Majesty's good and faithful subjects.—It is not to be wondered at that such numbers had engaged in the plot—a conspiracy which attracted to it the ambitious, the impatient, the disappointed, the discontented, the idle, the profligate, and politically fanatic of a populous country must ever be numerously supported—but the discomfiture and disgrace that has attended their designs, will, I trust, in future induce men to seek rank and opulence, by cultivating those talents that are always seen in the train of the virtues; by learning; by sober industry; by patience and perseverance in useful and honorable pursuits; by promoting a ready obedience to the laws, and by paying the respect that is due to the King and Constitution, from which they derive security and protection. Rank and distinction so acquired are dignified—riches so earned are our own, and will prosper with our posterity.

The two Houses of our Parliament in the full exposure, they have made in their reports, of the various impositions under which this conspiracy grew to be formidable, will render it difficult in any future period for treason to continue to personate public spirit until the very eve of insurrection.

We shall not again be told, that men closeted in dark cabals, who affect to bind themselves to political measures by unlawful and equivocal oaths—
whose

those orders and proceedings are wrapped up in secrecy, who by every sort of libel circulate discontent in order to prepare the minds of men for misaffection.

We shall not, I say, again be told that these men have no other view than parliamentary reform; all who are not wilfully blind shall acknowledge the imposture and the parliamentary reformer of a future day, such as I describe, will stand exposed the wild revolutionist,

Amongst the monsters produced by this faction, one of the greatest is the attempt made by them to reduce all descriptions of men, and amongst them, the Roman Catholics of Ireland, into an unnatural confederacy with the Government of France—a Government whose earliest act of dominion was to overthrow all Roman Catholic establishments within its own country—a government which profaned its own Christian churches, and offered up to *Reason* the incense that lay upon the altars of religious worship—a Government which chased the Pope himself with insult out of Rome—stripped his churches of their decorations, pillaged their treasures, and polluted their sanctuaries.

And still stranger must it be, if after such well known treatment of their church, and also of him who is its head, any of the Roman Catholic clergy of this country should be led to take a part with the French against our Government; under whose auspices, Catholic Colleges were built up in Ireland as they were thrown down in France, and whilst the French Government (in its eagerness for the possessions of the church) was occupied in France in the unfeeling extermination of their clergy, by hundreds, and by thousands; here it was the public care to perpetuate their Order, and this has been done, without exercising any controul over its tuition or interfering with its discipline.

Every

Every history I have met with, has shewn that the most ambitious and most self-interested usurpers have set out, in all ages, and in all countries by professing to be the poor man's friend; and this sort of philanthropy all the founders of the Irish Union did of course at first put on; and how have they manifested their friendship? In our towns and cities they have called off men from their useful labours to consult on plans of ideal Republics and visionary Commonwealths; the artizans and manufacturers desist from their occupations—they collect, and conceal, mortal weapons—all is alarm—the speculations and improvements of the affluent which used to distribute employment and abundance amongst the lower orders, are postponed until more favourable times shall hold out the prospect of more permanent security. The profession of arms, for public and private defence, is almost the only visible occupation; and it is much to be regretted, that the inconvenience and distress which has followed, is not confined to the criminals who occasioned it; this is no more than a faint sketch of what has been very lately the state of our towns, but the Union did not confine itself to their limits; it has sent its emissaries through a peaceable, industrious, and improving country; and amongst the laborious, and contented, it has created wants and desires which were never before felt, and which in the scale and order of civilized life, are suited only to the higher ranks in society: it has excited amongst them vain hopes, and bad passions—it has awakened their fears, and roused up their revenge by imaginary dangers—and the peasant (who attends with credulity to whatever may draw him into mischief) is abused by false news, and strange prophecies: with unforeseen and alarming offences, they first make strong laws necessary, and then calumniate and vilify the acts of the legislature:

flature: hence it was, that men who loved their country, and were ready to defend it with their lives, soon after submitted to be sworn to betray it over to French adventurers: hence it is that in many parts of this once happy kingdom, the sincere, the kind-hearted, and the hospitable, Irish character is no more to be found, and no longer serves to sweeten and to enliven human intercourse: and hence it is that where innocence was once used to repose, guilt now stalks restless and disturbed—where all was harmony it is now become the scene of discord—and where there was a cheerful wife and a playful family, there is now a houseless widow left to curse the wretches who seduced, or perhaps oppressed, the father of her children from his home to rush on his own destruction.—Such, and still worse, is the afflicting view which the disturbed parts of our country present to the eye of sensibility.

What infatuation! that any man but the outlaw or the outcast, should put his life and fortune under the orders of a Directory, composed of men, whom he never saw or knew—of whose talents in Revolutionary emergency there never was any trial; with whose ability to fill the station of law-giver, and with whose moderation and wisdom in the exercise of power he is utterly unacquainted.

Of the various motives which men have for embarking in Revolution—the desire of plunder is perhaps that which seduces the greatest numbers.

But see how much against the dictates of plain reason he acts, who would overturn the law which secures to his opulent neighbour, his life and property. Let me ask what is life without the security of the law?—It is a precarious existence held only till another person is by interest, or by enmity tempted to take it away. And what is property without the security of the law? It is that possession, which we hold only whilst we are stronger than

than those who covet it.—If then the law and the constitution were overturned, and the strong allowed to plunder the weak, how long would he enjoy the goods he so acquired?—And what security would he in his turn have for his misgotten wealth?—Would the riches he had obtained by pillage cease to be coveted by others, because they had changed owners?—Surely no.

A second and a third set of spoilers would not be wanting, to strip, and perhaps to slay, the men who were early and active in the works of depredation—let not therefore any one who would preserve life or liberty, or who either has or ever hopes to have, property, be tempted to rise against the constitution and the law; their value as well to the poor, as to the rich, is, (as many of our greatest blessings are) seldom fairly appreciated until the enjoyment of them is interrupted.

These observations on the uncommon extent, and nature of the treasons of the present times having been submitted to you; the sort of evidence that may be expected to shew the guilt, or innocence, of the culprits charged with this offence is well deserving of your consideration.

It is notorious, that these offenders are bound to each other by oaths; and however these oaths may in other respects vary, in all of them there is a clause of secrecy, and an engagement not to give evidence against each other in Courts of Justice—Thus we see that the public justice of the land is the foremost in their apprehensions—and they most providently prepare for trial, and lay a ground for acquittal, as soon as they meditate, and resolve to commit the crime,

From the very nature of treasonable conspiracy, written papers and the testimony of accomplices, or persons considered so to be, are the proofs from which conviction, in general, can reasonably be expected.

flected. The United Men were fully aware of
 this—to the dishonour of their profession they ap-
 pear to have had amongst them, some Barristers,
 and they have doubtless under the advice of such
 associates, as much as possible, and studiously avoid-
 ed committing any proofs of their guilt to paper—
 out to secure themselves against the vast host of ac-
 complices engaged, and to lead unseen, and unknown,
 was a work requiring the most ingenious manage-
 ment—however their contrivances served only to
 diminish the danger, but could not wholly remove
 it; and without individual confidence the noxious
 parts, could not be connected into one destructive
 system. Thus it appears that the danger arising
 from the desertion or remorse of accomplices was
 inevitable, and therefore every terror, that might
 affright the heart; and every personal abuse that
 might wound the feelings of the man, according to
 his rank, were stored up for such as might relent—
 and besides this, a flagitious sort of false honor was
 inculcated, that might prevent men from hearken-
 ing to the voice of nature, and so putting a stop to
 the intended carnage; hence it was that whilst many
 did from their souls, hate, and abhor this new ty-
 ranny, and languished to declare that hatred and
 abhorrence, but a few men had the courage, or the
 virtue, to break loose from the toils in which they
 were entangled, to confess their own, and in order
 to stop the mischief prosecute the guilt of their ac-
 complices.

Whoever submits himself to be sworn and become
 a member in conspiracy, does thereby not only
 make a base surrender of all character, but makes
 himself also, whether present or absent, a principal
 or accessory in all the various crimes of his accom-
 plices committed in furtherance of the common
 end. The criminality in which he may be involv-
 ed, and the legal punishments to which he is thus
 deservedly

deservedly exposed, are to the last degree alarming—yet many have of late acted as if these plain rules of law and justice had not existed. Some there were thus implicated in crime, who have happily merged all their criminality in public service.

We can well conceive that an unfortunate man, under the continual pressure of malign influence, may be led on, step by step, near to a horrible extremity—but there the abused feelings of the man revolt against further seduction; and he will follow no farther—there he stands, anxious for nothing but the best means of making the fullest atonement to God and his Country, and this I trust is the general feeling of multitudes, who are now no longer United Irishmen.

You must be sensible that a prosecutor of this sort, must be the most circumstantial detector of secret treason. Crimes must in our Courts be proved by facts within the knowledge of the witnesses, and if any man does seriously and in good earnest look for better parol evidence, of a treasonable conspiracy than this, his notion of conspiracy must be singular, and his experience must be slender of the caution and circumspection of this sort of guilt. Again, persons prosecuting under such circumstances, are charged by their former associates and their adherents, to be guilty of perjury against the wicked oath they had taken as United Men, and on that account they would have such witnesses, held to be infamous and incompetent—and very convenient had it been to the Union, if such doctrine had found a favourable reception in Courts of Law.—The danger which conspirators must dread had then been wholly removed.—The guilty would no longer regard each other with distrust, and treason would be hatched in the most perfect security.

But, gentlemen, when criminals, confederated to overthrow the constitution, cause an outcry to be raised

ected. The United Men were fully aware of this—to the dishonour of their profession they appear to have had amongst them, some Barristers, and they have doubtless under the advice of such associates, as much as possible, and studiously avoided committing any proofs of their guilt to paper—but to secure themselves against the vast host of accomplices engaged, and to lead unseen, and unknown, was a work requiring the most ingenious management—however their contrivances served only to diminish the danger, but could not wholly remove it; and without individual confidence the noxious parts, could not be connected into one destructive system. Thus it appears that the danger arising from the desertion or remorse of accomplices was inevitable, and therefore every terror, that might affright the heart; and every personal abuse that might wound the feelings of the man, according to his rank, were stored up for such as might relent—and besides this, a flagitious sort of false honor was inculcated, that might prevent men from hearkening to the voice of nature, and so putting a stop to the intended carnage; hence it was that whilst many did from their souls, hate, and abhor this new tyranny, and languished to declare that hatred and abhorrence, but a few men had the courage, or the virtue, to break loose from the toils in which they were entangled, to confess their own, and in order to stop the mischief prosecute the guilt of their accomplices.

Whoever submits himself to be sworn and become a member in conspiracy, does thereby not only make a base surrender of all character, but makes himself also, whether present or absent, a principal or accessory in all the various crimes of his accomplices committed in furtherance of the common end. The criminality in which he may be involved, and the legal punishments to which he is thus deservedly

deservedly exposed, are to the last degree alarming—yet many have of late acted as if these plain rules of law and justice had not existed. Some there were thus implicated in crime, who have happily merged all their criminality in public service.

We can well conceive that an unfortunate man, under the continual pressure of malign influence, may be led on, step by step, near to a horrible extremity—but there the abused feelings of the man revolt against further seduction; and he will follow no farther—there he stands, anxious for nothing but the best means of making the fullest atonement to God and his Country, and this I trust is the general feeling of multitudes, who are now no longer United Irishmen.

You must be sensible that a prosecutor of this sort, must be the most circumstantial detector of secret treason. Crimes must in our Courts be proved by facts within the knowledge of the witnesses, and if any man does seriously and in good earnest look for better parol evidence, of a treasonable conspiracy than this, his notion of conspiracy must be singular, and his experience must be slender of the caution and circumspection of this sort of guilt. Again, persons prosecuting under such circumstances, are charged by their former associates and their adherents, to be guilty of perjury against the wicked oath they had taken as United Men, and on that account they would have such witnesses, held to be infamous and incompetent—and very convenient had it been to the Union, if such doctrine had found a favourable reception in Courts of Law.—The danger which conspirators must dread had then been wholly removed.—The guilty would no longer regard each other with distrust, and treason would be hatched in the most perfect security.

But, gentlemen, when criminals, confederated to overthrow the constitution, cause an outcry to be raised

raised against persons in such circumstances; that should only recommend them the more to the countenance, protection, and gratitude of all others.

It would give the most lively joy to every good man, if these offenders could be reclaimed by measures of mercy and forgiveness—such have lately been tried; and their efficacy has since been most powerfully seconded—I mean by the splendor and effect of Naval Victory, and by the loyalty of the country, now supported by the force and spirit of the British army.

When they who are privates in the ranks of our conspirators, now look at the miserable remnant of this rebellion, their own observation must convince them, that the criminal chimæras which they formed, are altogether impracticable; and it will require only a moderate share of reflection, to induce them to abandon an enterprise that is at once wicked, perilous, and hopeless.

But as to such as had attained to place and rank in the conspiracy—As to men who have been for years past tormenting themselves and their hearers with seditious disputation.

As to men who were the most enamoured of French principles, and French manners, when French butcheries were most disgusting.

As to men who have caused more violent deaths, and greater human misery, than ever was heard of in Ireland; and yet have such rare talents as can persuade the common people even to this day, that they are their best friends.

As to men who would at any time cheerfully devote the lives of a thousand foolish followers rather than sacrifice one of their own head-strong opinions.

As to men whose pride is suited to the high station, which in their visions they had allotted to themselves, under their new-fangled constitution;

tion; and whose honor, now stands bound to the enemy, by the stately obligation of an Imperial treaty.

As for men who seat themselves, as it were, upon thrones, and from thence deliver lectures pleasing to simple minds, upon the doctrines of equality

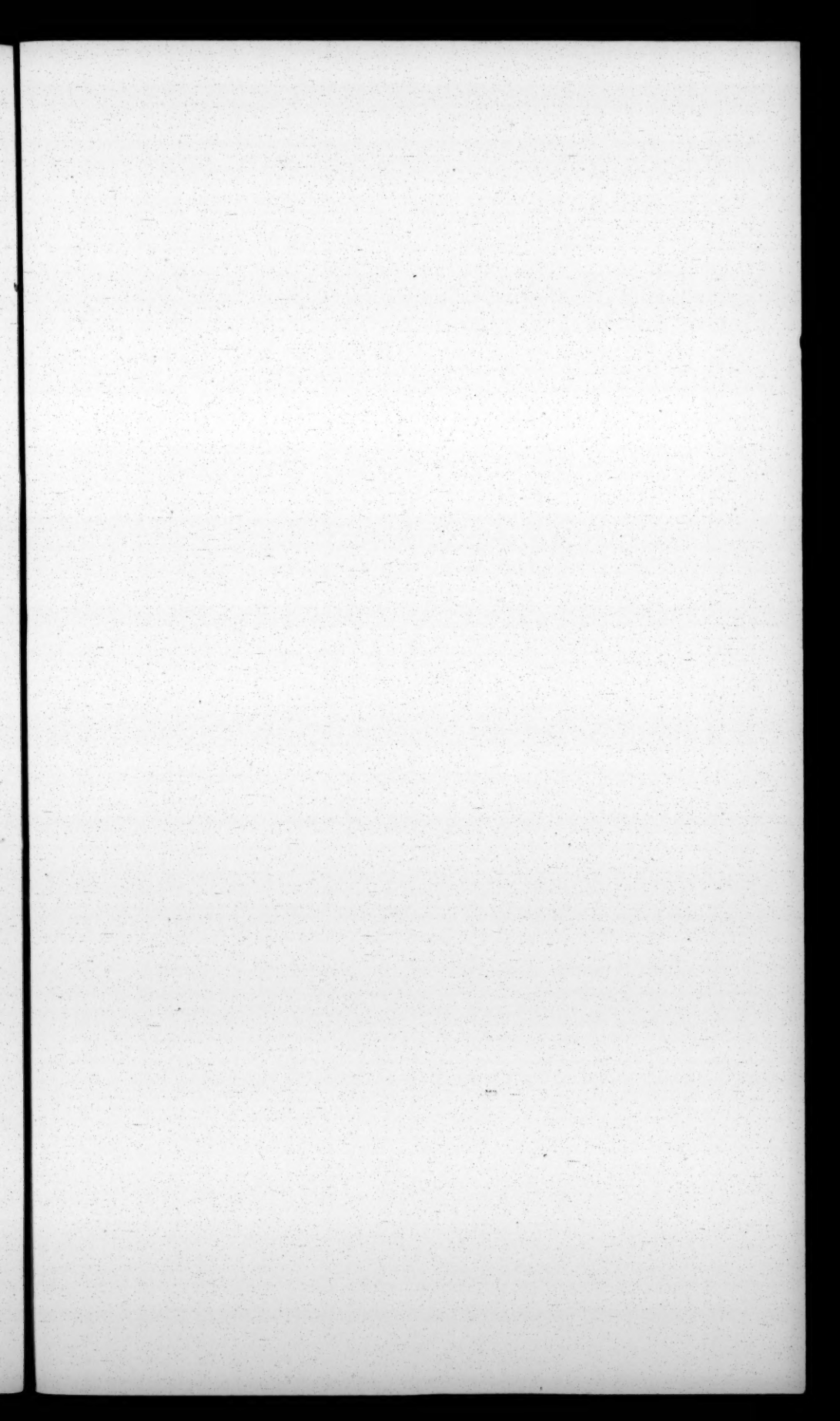
It is a hard task I fear for such men, together with their habits, to lay down their more than princely expectation, and become good and dutiful subjects.

As this great evil ought wholly to engross the public mind, until it is totally removed—I have thought it right to direct your attention on this occasion to it alone.

The vigilance and the valour of the loyal in every department in the community, is still wanted to restore and secure the peace, and to retrieve the character of our country.

And finally, let every man whether he be placed in an exalted station, and endowed with transcendent talents, or whether with modest merit in his humble line, he renders any service honorable to himself, and useful to his King and Country, let him I say, after the example of the pious and victorious Lord Nelson, not omit to ascribe to the blessing of Almighty God, all the merit of the achievement.





592 c. 10